



PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Westminster Industrial Estate,
Mold Road, Gwersyllt, Wrexham**

Whitley Brothers Ltd

**An outline application to establish the
principle of development**

December 2014

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1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by The Harris Partnership Ltd (Architects) on behalf of Whitley Brothers Ltd. It supports a planning application for outline planning permission for a residential development on land currently known as Westminster Industrial Estate, off Mold Road, Wrexham.

The aim of the statement is to ensure the process of design is integral to the creation of new developments, generating attractive, useable, durable and adoptable places with sustainability being a key intention of development at all times.

The requirement for Design and Access Statements has arisen in response to the need to promote better quality and more sustainable design in development as a requirement under planning legislation.

The proposal comprises:-

Redevelopment of the former Westminster Industrial Estate to form:

- 85 new dwelling houses (Use class C3)
- Associated parking facilities comprising parking spaces for all residents.
- Pedestrian access routes and servicing.
- Structured low maintenance landscaping.

This statement provides information on:

- The site and its surroundings.
- The application proposals.
- Design principles adopted in the scheme.

It then appraises the design of the development scheme in the context of the site and its surroundings and concludes that the design is appropriate in this context such that a grant of planning permission on design grounds is appropriate.

The Statement is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying Planning Statement and Transport Assessment along with submitted reports and studies as requested to form a detailed planning submission package.

3.0 Design Policy and Guidance

PPW (Planning Policy Wales-Feb 2014 V6.) places emphasis on encouraging sustainable and inclusive patterns of development through good and inclusive design. Good design gives the opportunity to reduce energy use, tackle CO2 emissions and promote sustainable patterns of development. The accessibility of the site with the existing transport infrastructures will ensure these issues are addressed.

The application conforms with PPW in that the proposal seeks to promote economic development and facilitate sustainable economic growth by building in a highly sustainable development.

Design is a key consideration in the determination of an application for housing development whereby proposals should secure a high quality inclusive design for future residents.

4.0 Site and Surroundings

The development site is a former Westminster Industrial Estate on Mold Road. It has been mostly vacant for a couple of years. The total planning application site area extends to 25,016sqm (6.18acres) and is located in a village named Gwersyllt which is a small district north of Wrexham within Wrexham County Borough Councils Authority Area. Gwersyllt is situated close to the Wales/England border and is one of Wrexham's largest villages.

The site is currently under occupied with many of the existing buildings standing vacant with a 2.4m high palisade fence encompassing the site boundary. The site is accessible via a long access road joining the site with Mold Road. Large gates currently secure the site preventing vehicular access at the site entrance.

The western and northern boundary is formed by a dense hedge and tree line. A footpath then divides the application site boundary with the adjacent leisure centre and playing fields located to the north and west. The footpath wraps around the site to from a footbridge over the railway to the north connecting to the school located to the south. An informal footpath has been created to the south of the application site, and the layout seeks to formalise this route. The south-east of the site is bound by several gardens to properties Highfield and Hillcrest which are accessed from Mold Road. Within the site there is an embankment surrounding the north and west boundaries acting as a landscaped buffer as a backdrop, this raises as much as 2m high in parts and is in part reasonably established.

The topography within the site is reasonably level with the exception of the embankment to the rear of the site varying in height from 2-3m above the general level within the site.

Aerial View



4.1. Aerial photograph taken from Google maps showing the planning application site in context.

5.0 Site Context



5.1. Photograph 1

Image from the access road into the site, showing the adjacent Building supplies company.

(Photograph taken June 2014.)



5.2. Photograph 2

Image from the access road into the site, showing the adjacent Building supplies company on the left and the existing club on the right. The access road running between the two differing uses.

(Photograph taken from streetview.)



5.3. Photograph 3

Image from the access road looking towards the informal footpath, with palisade fencing to either side.

(Photograph taken June 2014.)



5.4. Photograph 4

Image from the car park area of the previous concrete testing plant.

(Photograph taken June 2014.)



5.5. Photograph 5

Image from the centre of the site looking west towards the existing buildings, the existing yard area is predominantly hard landscaped in concrete.

(Photograph taken June 2014.)



5.6. Photograph 6

Image from the centre of the site looking north towards the existing bungalow to be retained, the existing yard area is predominantly hard landscaped in concrete.

(Photograph taken June 2014.)



5.7. Photograph 7

Image from the embankment adjacent to the site boundary looking south towards the existing industrial buildings.

(Photograph taken June 2014.)



5.8. Photograph 8

Image from the embankment adjacent to the site boundary looking east towards the existing industrial buildings.

(Photograph taken June 2014.)

6.0 The Process and Design Principles

General Design Principles

The following key design principles for the development of the site have been identified from a detailed assessment of the site and surroundings, an evaluation of constraints and opportunities and a consideration of planning policies and initiatives and LA guidelines which have informed the proposal:

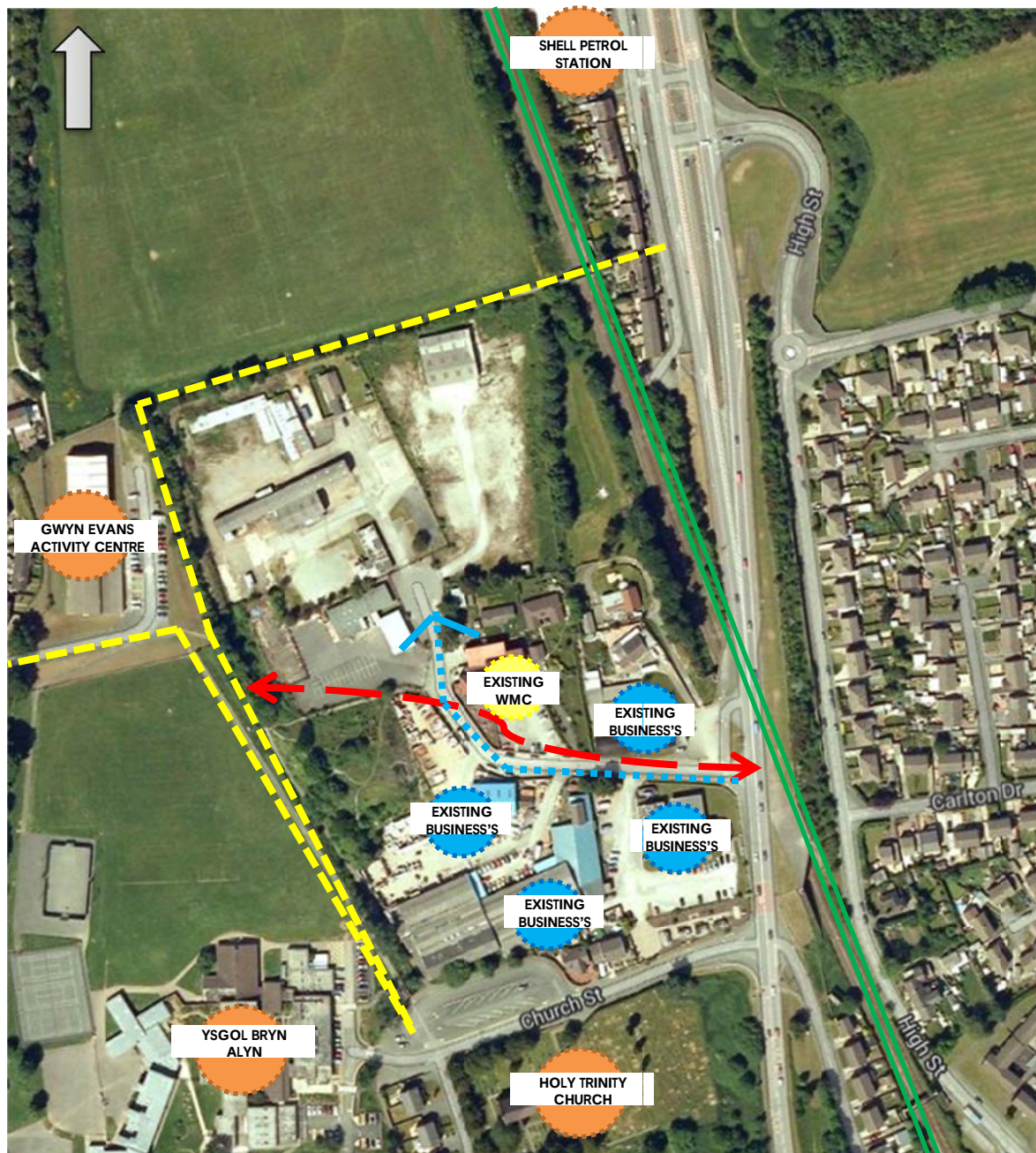
- To visually enhance the industrial site which is located on Westminster Industrial Estate, set back from Mold Road.
- To form a natural addition to the wider context within Gwersyllt village.
- To create a safe and convenient vehicular route into the site together with enhanced routes for the pedestrians.
- To update and enhance the site visual amenity creating a modern, sympathetic and exciting addition to the local area.

Pre-Application Discussions November 2014

The key principles throughout the design process has been to retain the existing site access and enhance pedestrian routes and linkages across the site. The scheme has undertaken several changes through design development throughout dialogue with the design team.

There has been further dialogue with the L.A. at pre-application stage regarding the site.

The initial design considerations for this site derive from the proximity to the neighbouring properties, the uses and the optimum efficient use of the space provided.



Existing Context / Initial Concept

The diagram identifies several of the key parameters that have been considered in the initial scheme layout.

The parameters;

- **Yellow** shows the footpath routes around the site connecting the local amenities to the north (on Mold Road) to the site and surrounding uses such as the leisure centre and schools.
- **Blue** shows the existing vehicular access from Mold Road into the site via the privately owned driveway.
- **Red** shows the intended improvement to pedestrian routes, where an informal route currently exists.
- **Green** shows the existing rail route through the village.
- **Orange** notes identifying the local amenities.
- **Blue** notes identifying local business premises.
- **Yellow** notes identify the WMC

The size and nature of the site, lends itself to high density residential scheme could be achieved, with additional scope for public open space.



Design Development

Drawing; 13092 – 001A Proposed Site Plan

This scheme was initially prepared to show the appropriate densities that could be achieved on a site area of 6.18acre.

The high density approach provided a layout with 18 dwellings per acre with a limited amount of Public open space positioned along the principle access route on the right hand side.

The mixture of properties ranging from;

- 2 bed apartments
- 3 bed town houses
- 4 bed town houses

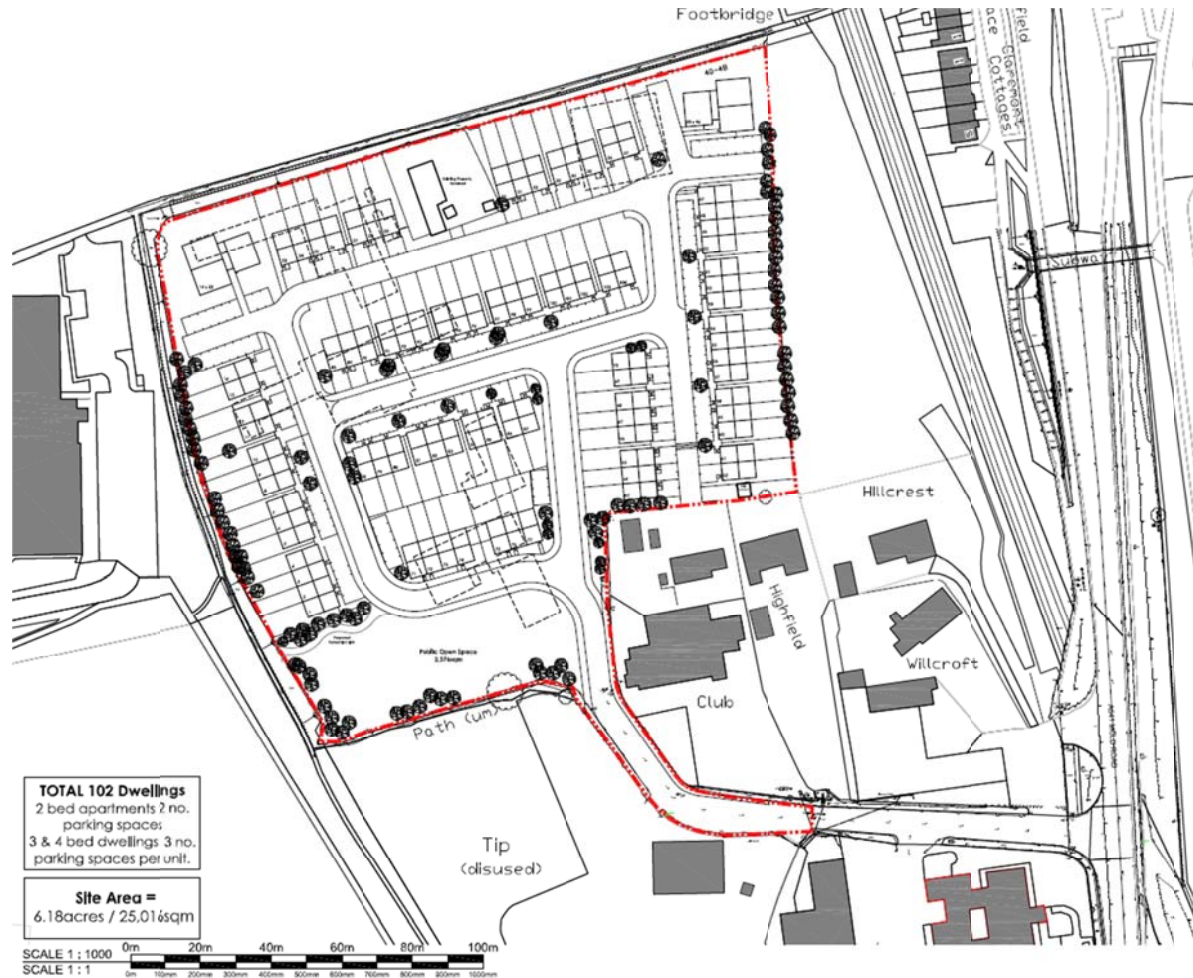
The layout was chaired at a design team meeting at which the client advised that the existing bungalow needed to be retained as part of the design proposals.

The sketch scheme was updated following client comments

Drawing; 13092 – 100 Proposed Site Plan

A pre application meeting took place in November 2014 with Wrexham Borough Council. In the main it centred on;

- **Land to the north** of the application site, potential opportunities for a comprehensive development – it was however agreed that this application in isolation would not preclude the comprehensive development in the future.
- **Design**, whilst this meets with highways and planning standards there is opportunity to create a distinctive scheme which could provide character areas. Introduction of and create more interest in the design and over engineered appearance, communal parking areas to free up additional space. Allow the public open space to integrate into the overall scheme cohesively.
- **Density**, no specific issue was raised in relation to high density approach, however a suggested 14/15 dwellings per acre was deemed more appropriate.



- **Highways**, parking along the access road was mentioned and given as it was acknowledged that Kent's (the existing business) is loading/unloading and parking on the access road, which as pointed out they have no right legally to do so.
- **Contamination and Drainage** were also mentioned in light of any issues here being dealt with by way of standard planning conditions.
- **Supporting documentation** for planning submission was agreed.

7.0 The Scheme

1. Access

The existing site access from Mold Road, is being retained as part of the proposals to make efficient use of the site and the infrastructure is already in place. A new footpath is proposed to follow the entire length of the access route from Mold Road into the site to enable a safe access / egress for pedestrians accessing the site on foot, this also ensures a simple access and egress scenario.

Access for emergency vehicles, service vehicles and waste collection vehicles has been considered in the design and layout of the proposed residential development, sufficient to comply with the requirements stated in Wrexham Borough Council's residential parking standards. The cul-de-sac road arrangements proposed terminate in suitable sized turning areas and where private drives are proposed they fall within a maximum 45m length permitted to allow access by emergency services. The proposed development has been set out within the following categories;

- Connector streets
- Local residential streets
- shared surface streets
- home zones

The principle site access road designed as the 'connector street' from Mold Road, with secondary linkages such as; the first spur on the right a 'local resident street' with communal parking. On the left is a 'shared surface street' with specific parking to properties demarked. The secondary routes have been designed to be local residential streets with the remaining 'home zones' having shared surface treatments.

To avoid the dominance of cars, visitor parking will be a mix of additional spaces within the shared surface streets and home zones. At areas where there will be pedestrians where there will be pedestrians crossing or vehicles pulling out of parking courts etc, it is proposed that shared surfaces and raised tables are used to encourage vehicles to slow down.

It is proposed that 2no. off road parking spaces are provided for 2 bed apartments with 3no. spaces provided for 3 and 4 bed dwellings. These have been (where possible) laid out in tandem arrangement to reduce visual impact of the car on the street scene or as shared parking courts landscaping is proposed to act as a visual screen. Larger dwellings have in some instances integral garages providing the 3rd parking space. All spaces are a minimum of 2.4m x 4.8m.

It is proposed that all cycles will be stored in garages and / or sheds to be located in rear gardens of the properties, the apartments will require suitable provision with access to the residents of each block only.

2. Environmental Sustainability

This statement details how the proposed development will meet the requirements of the PPW (Planning Policy Wales-Feb 2014 V6.)

Sustainable design

Whilst the site limitations prevent all the principle elevations being orientated to the south, the vast majority of the dwellings are orientate to the south, east or west to ensure they benefit from passive solar gain at some point during the day.

The proposed dwellings will be of traditional masonry construction and will therefore have a high thermal mass to act as a buffer from external heat fluctuations,

Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

The objective is to minimise car usage and to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport. The site benefits from excellent sustainable transport links such as rail and buses into the local towns and villages.

Energy efficiency

To prevent heat loss the dwellings will be insulated and measures will be taken to limit the air leakage. The dwellings will be constructed to meet the requirement of the current revision to the building Regulations Approved Document Part L1A 'Conservation of Fuel and Power (New Dwellings for use in Wales – July 14)' at the time of construction. All habitable rooms within the dwelling will benefit from good natural daylighting.

Water Resource Management

The dwellings will be designed for a maximum potential water consumption of 120 litres of water per person, per day. The design will utilise water saving measures such as dual flush toilets, aerated spray taps and water efficient white goods.

Flood Risk Management

To minimise surface water run-off and promote Sustainable Urban Drainage, the external hard landscaping has been designed to allow all surfaces water from roofs and hard surfaces to discharge into SUD's system.

Biodiversity

In order to minimise the impact of the development on its site and surrounding ecology, where possible, all ecological features of value will be retained and protected during construction and measures introduced to enhance local ecology (Please see ecology report).

Waste and Recycling

The proposals will encourage responsible waste recycling and management. Recycling and general waste bins will be stored within designated storage areas,(details to be agreed under a full application).

Site waste generated in the construction of the development will be managed to both limit the amount of waste generated and to recycle or re-use any waste that is generated by the development.

Where possible the materials utilised in the construction of the development will be locally sourced and local tradesmen will be used to minimise transportation environmental impacts resulting from the development. Where possible, materials with A and A+ Green guide rating will be specified in the development. Timber will be sourced from sustainable certified sources where possible.

3. Character

Landscaping

Although the landscaping element of the works does not form a part of the outline application, conceptually the landscaping of the site has been considered throughout the design process to ensure the sensitive integration of the proposed development into the landscape.

- **Landscaped buffer**
Landscape buffer; a bank of perennial trees and shrubs used to mitigate the impact of the existing rail line and activity centre to both east and west of the development site providing privacy to the proposed dwellings.
- **Focus Open Space**
The focus open space located to the left of the access road providing an attractive entrance to the development, being an active space with designated footpaths connecting routes and allowing permeability.
- **Localised planting**
The indicative layout provides opportunities for smaller clusters of planting to be provided around the development site.

It is proposed that planting will be positioned under the ground floor windows to the principle elevations to counter balance hard landscaping surfaces. Areas of low level decorative planting will be introduced to the sides of driveways and blank elevations, trees will be located on corners acting and aiding navigation and softening the visual impact.

A reserved matters application will provide details of trees and plant types.

Form and Scale

Please refer to drawing 13092-101B Proposed Site plan and 13092-V101A for a graphical representation of the density of the proposed development. In terms of scale there are very few examples of development above 2 storeys in the surrounding area. Given the low scale nature of surrounding development and the edge of the settlement location, development is proposed to be two storeys in the main, with opportunities for 2.5 story development in a limited number of key locations to mark important views or corners, however this will evolve further at the detailed design stage and by way of the reserved matters application.

The focus is on the two storey development in the main in line with local character, this will over time allow for a sensitive integration into the development. The housing proposed is therefore 2 storeys on the whole in line with context and market conditions.

In terms of scale and parameters the properties are that of semi-detached and terraces of 3-4 properties.

Where 2 storey units are opted for, the scale used; (W x D x H to ridge)

- 5m x 10m x 8-10m

Where 2.5 storey units are proposed, the scales used; (W x D x H to ridge)

- 5m x 10m x 9-11.5m

The width and depth may vary dependent upon house type information upon detailed design.

Amount

The proposed development sets out the proposed for 85no. Residential dwellings (with 1no. existing property to be retained) comprising of a mixture of properties varying from semi-detached to terraces comprising of 3 and 4 dwellings, each property comprising gross internal area of 80m² - over 2 floors and 100 m² for properties over 2.5 floors. Parking provisions for each property has been discussed in 1) Access.

Layout

The indicative layout of the houses have been carefully designed to respond to the immediate context, which includes; semi-detached properties and small terraced houses. The indicative layout shows rear gardens of 11.5m, however the reserved matters application will give precise measurement for each plot.

To add variety to the street scape, the proposed dwellings have been arranged in a number of different ways, overlooking the principle roads through the site, in smaller clusters on local residential roads and in small private drive or mews developments.



**Proposed Site
Layout, drawing;
13092 – V101A
Proposed Site
Plan**

External Appearance

The proposed dwellings have been designed to relate to the best examples found locally, whilst also taking the opportunity to create a distinctive place in its own right.

The intention is to create a sense of place through the regular spacing of semi-detached and terraced properties with a strong distinctive emphasis to the elevations through the use of windows and gables etc. to add interest. Together with a mixture of materials in a variety of dark red and brown bricks to suit the local vernacular, this can add interest by dressing the windows and providing contrast with a render and brick pallet. Notwithstanding this additional string courses can be included to break up expanse of brick by using a contrasting colour or texture.

However, the appearance will be considered fully at the reserved matters application stage.

Example of the elevations;

The two examples derive from examples of how interest can be added in terms of contrasting materials and modelling by way of gables can add interest to the development by way of a sense of space in the differing elevation treatments.



4. Community Safety

Crime Prevention and Site Security

The safety and security of the future residents of the proposed development has been carefully considered from an early stage in the design process.

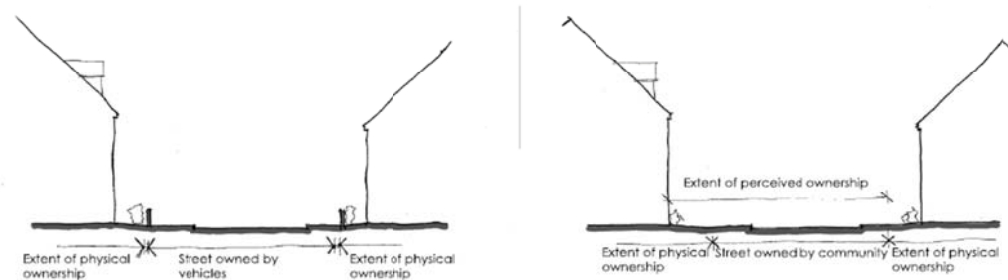
The indicative design approach to this can be broken into two elements, the prevention of crime within the dwellings themselves and secondly the prevention of crime with the development as a whole.

Our approach has generally been to attempt to implement the following actions as a method of providing greater security by surveillance and promoting the sense of community by making the residents feel they own or have an interest in the shared spaces.

- Non or minimal treatment to the front boundary of the property to improve natural surveillance and promote a feeling of ownership of the street.
- Use of defensive planting where appropriate, under windows etc.
- The use of varying orientation for the properties and 'corner turn' properties to improved surveillance.
- Principle elevations overlooking the street.
- Use of suitable specifications for external doors and windows to make unauthorised entry more difficult.
- No climbing aids adjacent to dwellings just as bin stores, low walls etc.

The development as a whole and the connectivity to local amenities has also been designed with the intention of deterring criminal activity;

- Allowing easy access to public transport.
- Avoid isolated footpaths and lay out housing to allow natural surveillance to footpaths.
- Utilise open front gardens to promote natural surveillance of road and neighbouring properties.
- Minimise the number of potential vehicular and pedestrian exit points from the site.



5. Movement to, from and within the development

As noted previously, the site is located to the north of Gwersyllt, ideally located with many local amenities located within a short walk of the site, notwithstanding this the site benefits from excellent public transport links.

The site is easily accessible by public transport with existing bus stops located across Mold Road, a short walking distance from the site. Existing bus service's provide transport links to and around the local villages such as Wrexham/Mold/Flint and Connah's Quay relatively frequently. This promotes the objective to minimise car usage and to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport. The nearest railway station is located 0.5km away south of the development site (approximately 8min walk).

As previously stated the site has been designed to provide principle and secondary linkages, this encourages the safer movement in and around the development. Shared surface treatments promote the specific parking and carriageways within the development with raised tables further enhancing the requirement to move safely and slowly throughout the development.

Clear pedestrian routes have been provided to better connect the local facilities with Mold Road, creating a direct thoroughfare through the site as opposed to the informal route that currently exists. This ultimately provides better links to the local population as well as providing the site with appropriate permeability. The routes are made as safe as practically possible by adding width to the routes so as not to appear narrow and unnerving, attractive with landscaping and ultimately safe routes as they are covered by natural surveillance.

6. Conclusion

The proposed development has been designed to create an attractive place to live whilst avoiding any adverse impacts on neighbouring uses.

The proposed works will make significant improvements to the character and appearance of the locality and the latest proposals offer a viable and sympathetic development strategy that will provide a more sustainable development for the future.

In summary, the following principles have been adopted in the layout and design of the proposed development's.

- Efficient use of land with an appropriate density of development;
- Providing a mix of housing to reflect the local need for family housing.
- A safe and secure environment, with consideration to the layout and structure of the development proposed, orientating frontages towards streets, footpaths and spaces to achieve natural surveillance of public spaces and;
- A pleasant and attractive place to live.